Thesis Title   Development of a Multidimensional Quality of Life Instrument for the Rural Elderly

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ABSTRACT

Quality of Life is an ultimate goal in the development of population of any social group . It is still a complexed and non-fully deleloped concept in terms of definition and measurement, especially that of the elderly whose number is rapidly increasing. The objective of this study was to examine the definition and components of the quality of life and to develop instruments for measuring the quality of life of the rural elderly. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative approaches to determine the quality of life of the elderly in the Northeast. In the first step of the study,the investigator utilized focus group discussion 4 times, in each of which attended by 6-9 elderly to examine definition and components of the quality of life. Secondly, the instrument for measuring the quality of life was construct and test for its discriminant validity and reliability using 80 elderly. Results of the first test were used to improve the instrument which then underwent the second test for its discri-minant,construct and criterion related validity, reliability, and standard score using 520 elderly. Then a case study was conducted on 6 elderly to confirm the quantitative discovery. In the last step of the study, the constructed instrument was tested using a known groups with high and low quality of life. This instrument was the interview forms comprising 59 items for measuring the objective wellbeing and 21 for subjective wellbeing. The data collected from the study were then analysis by the SPSS program.

The finding concluded : 1) The quality of life of the rural elderly was the individual wellbeing indicated by 6 indicators : activities of daily living, physical and' mental health, social, economic and environmental conditions. These indicators were used to determine the contents of the instrument. 2) The instrument for measuring the quality of llife was constructed from the results of the 3-step study. The analysis of its discriminant validity revealed that each item or indicator could distinguish the elderly with high quality of life from those with low quality of life. The examination of the construct validity discovered that the objective wellbeing comprised 12 factors, 6 of which could be clearly explained : activities of daily living, mental haelth, economic, environmental, physical health and relation with community. The factor structure of the subjective wellbeing included 6 factors : life satisfaction, satisfaction with physical health, economic condition, activities of daily living, environment and social conditions. The examination also revealed that every indicator drew to the theoretical base. The analysis of the criterion related validity disclosed that indicators of both high and low quality of life were related to the quality of life at 0.01 of the ladder scale. In the examination of the reliability, the first test resulted in the vadility score of 0.9023, while the validity of each indicator ranged from 0.5157 to 0.8112. In the validity of all indicators scored 0.8983 and that of each indicator was 0.6519-0.8614. The analysis of the standard score, normalized T-score was constructed and the quality of life was divided into 3 levels. The case study on the elderly revealed that the quality of life comprised many factors, each of which was important for the elderly. 3) The measurement of the quality of life of the 520 elderly in the Northeast using the instrument which underwent 3 test revealed that 11.7% of the elderly had good quality of life, 73.5% medium quality of life and 14.7% low quality of life.

The findings of this study led to the recommendation that the instrument should be used to measure the quality of life of differernt elderly groups, such as the poor, single, sick and urban elderly to determine the components of quality of life. The measurement results can be then used to delop a standardized measuring instrument.